

# ***NEWS RELEASE***

**STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE, DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**

***Carol A. Murray, Commissioner***

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**WORK ZONE AWARENESS WEEK KICKS OFF CONSTRUCTION SEASON**  
***80% OF WORK ZONE FATALITIES ARE DRIVERS OR PASSENGERS***

“How would you like it if someone drove through your office? The people who build our highways work where you drive.”

That’s the safety theme of the 2004 National Work Zone Awareness Week (April 4-11), which was kicked off today by the nation’s chief highway official. Federal Highway Administrator Mary Peters set up her office in the middle of a northern Virginia interchange on Interstate 95 to demonstrate the danger to drivers, passengers and workers from unsafe driving habits in highway work zones. Peters emphasized that safe driving habits can significantly reduce the more than 52,000 injuries and fatalities that occur each year in highway work zones.

Work zone fatalities increased 53 percent nationwide from 1998 to 2003. Four out of every five people killed were either drivers or passengers. In 2002, there were more than 17,500 work zone crashes nationwide, resulting in one injury every 15 minutes (143 a day) and 1,181 work zone fatalities (one every seven hours). Financial losses from work zone crashes in 2001 topped \$3 billion.

“Safety is not a spectator sport,” Mary Peters said. “Drivers should remember that they and their passengers are also in danger from carelessness in work zones.”

The New Hampshire Department of Transportation anticipates another busy summer construction season, with major road and bridge work underway or planned on such major highways as Interstate 93 (Plymouth-Camptown-Thornton), I-293 in Manchester (between Exits 1 and 2), NH Route 101 (Bedford) and NH Route 125 (Lee-Barrington). In addition, more than 440 miles of state highways are scheduled for paving work. Significant highway and bridge maintenance work can also be expected.

***Tips for driving safely in work zones include:***

- Expect the unexpected! Slow Down! Don’t Tailgate!
- Keep a safe distance between you and the vehicle ahead of you, and the construction workers and their equipment.
- Pay Attention to the Signs! Stay Alert and Minimize Distractions.
- Obey Road Crew Flaggers!
- Keep up with the Traffic Flow.
- Be Patient and Stay Calm.
- Schedule enough time to Drive Safely. Dial 511 or check out [www.511nh.com](http://www.511nh.com)